

On November 2, the Post echoed this endorsement of consumer freedom writing, "Retirees have a choice of insurance plans with widely varying costs, and some are faced with decisions on how much to spend out of pocket. If they choose to pay top dollar for branded medicines, the incentive to invent new medicines will rise. If they prefer to save money, incentives for innovation will decline a bit. Either way, a balance will be struck that reflects broad social preferences."

My colleagues, the Democrat bill, H.R. 4, that was passed, not through the democratic process here in Congress, but put on the floor without amendments, will not help the part D Medicare prescription drug program, it will hurt it. If you don't believe it, read these editorials of the Washington Post.

VOTERS MADE A MISTAKE TRUSTING DEMOCRATS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there is something awry in this House. You know, we have heard for the last 2 years I have been here in Congress about how if the Democrats were allowed to be in the majority, there was going to be openness, Mr. Speaker, there was going to be transparency, there was going to be bipartisanship; and yet right here the first rattle out of the box we have 3 weeks where the Republicans are not allowed any input whatsoever. Oh, we can come to the floor and fuss about it, but that is not input, there are no amendments, there are no changes that were allowed to be made. But now this week, we are beyond the 100 hours. And of course that was pretty ironic because promises, pledges, I assure you we are going to have openness, we are going to be bipartisan, well, when they saw around election time it was, gee, they had a chance of taking the majority, what did they do? Well, we don't want to keep that bipartisan promise, so let's change that. How can we do that? Oh, we will make a new promise. We will promise we are not going to keep our prior promise and we are just going to ramrod some things through in the opening days of Congress. Then they found out they enjoyed that, they liked that. Don't let them have any input. That is not right to Americans that nearly half of Americans are not allowed input into what goes on.

But this week takes the cake. Unbelievable. We have a bill that has only, as far as we can find out, had input from Congressman OBEY and Senator BYRD, it is the Obey-Byrd \$463 billion earmark. Now I have got some folks up here from my district from Lufkin, Texas; the mayor is here, the city manager. In fact, nine of my 12 full counties had never voted for a Republican

for Congress before, they are conservative Democratic counties. They don't run their counties and cities this way. They don't say the mayor is going back in the back rooms and is going to put together the budget for the next year. We are not going to have any kind of hearings, we are not going to allow any input. And here in Congress, in the past we have had review by subcommittees, and then the subcommittee hearings and taking testimony, and then we had a voting it out of subcommittee called a markup. Then we had review by the full committee. Then we had input from both Democrats and Republicans. Then we had a voting it out of committee. And then it went to the Rules Committee, and then the Rules Committee considered it. And then it came to the floor. And then there were opportunities for amendment, not on \$463 billion of American taxpayer money, no, not here. There is no subcommittee, no committee, no Rules Committee. Well, they may take it to Rules, but I am not sure about that because it won't matter. It is coming to the floor tomorrow for a vote on the \$463 billion Obey-Byrd earmark. That is not openness and transparency. I don't care how many new promises you make to break your old promises, that isn't right to the American people of my county, my county seats, Gilmer, Jefferson, Tyler, Longview, Marshall, Carthage, Henderson, Nacogdoches, Center, Hemphill, San Augustine, Lufkin; they would never run their city governments like this, they would never run their county governments like this. People would run them out of office if they tried to do what is going to be done tomorrow with \$463.5 billion of America's taxpayer dollars. That is just not right. That is not right.

You know, Democrats had kind of run the budget process in the ground, and people had enough. They saw the way Senator BYRD cost us hundreds of millions or billions of dollars building an FBI facility in West Virginia. They saw the way the earmarks got out of hand under Democrats, so they voted in Republicans in 1994. Republicans did a great job, welfare reform, bringing the budget to where it balanced. And then they got a little complacent, some of my colleagues got long in the tooth and forgot why they were there, and so we got voted out. And the Democrats said, trust us, we have learned our lessons, we are not going to let this happen again. And all I can think about over and over again is that line in Animal House where after the senior fraternity members had wrecked the young freshman pledge's car, the guy put his arm around the young freshman and said, in effect, well, you messed up, you trusted me. Well, voters trusted Democrats with the majority. And now, as we consider \$463 billion Obey-Byrd earmark that didn't have input from our friends across the aisle or Republicans, you messed up, you trusted them.

CHARLIE ALLEBACH, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I come here today not to speak about the great weighty issues of the day, whether it be Iraq or the budget process and procedures of the House, homeland security or any number of issues. No, Mr. Speaker, I come here today to talk about the career of a wonderful individual. You know, it was Tip O'Neill who once said that all politics is local, and I rise today to honor the career of one of our Nation's great local civic leaders, civic officials, Charlie Allebach, Jr.

Charlie has been serving the people of the Borough of Souderton, Pennsylvania, for almost 43 years. Let me say that again. That is for 43 years, he has served the people of Souderton, Pennsylvania. He first became a borough councilman in 1964—by the way, I was 4 years old at that time—he was appointed mayor in 1970, and he has been mayor ever since. But I just want you to know, too, that he has just announced his retirement.

Charlie has presided over the steady growth of a wonderful community, Souderton, Pennsylvania. If you don't know anything about Souderton, it is in the Indian Valley of Pennsylvania, Montgomery County. It has got a great tradition. The Mennonites have had an enormous influence on that area over the years, have deeply influenced the culture and tradition. There is a great sense of family and faith in that area. Souderton is an extraordinary community.

Charlie, also, I want you to know, has performed more than 2,400 marriage ceremonies, lent his time to local service organizations and has been devoted to the borough in every way imaginable.

On behalf of the people of the 15th Congressional District, I wish him the best during his retirement. We would like to keep him around in public office longer, but I understand that 40 years is a long time. We wish him the best in this richly deserved retirement.

I also ask that a copy of my remarks today be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that Charlie Allebach, Jr.'s career as the mayor of Souderton can be memorialized within the annals of Congress for all time and to all the people in the Indian Valley in Souderton, I know that they are perhaps watching today the proceedings of the House and I know they have such a deep affection for this man. We don't spend enough time in our lives as Members of Congress thanking and celebrating people who do things right, who enter public service because they believe in advancing the best interests of their community. They are not doing it for themselves. That is what Charlie Allebach is all about.

So to Charlie, we say once again, thank you for a job well done. We hope to see you around. We know we will, but just want you to know that your contributions to all of us, to our community, are deeply appreciated and will not be forgotten.

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On behalf of the people of the 15th Congressional District, I wish him the best during his retirement, and I ask that a copy of these remarks be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that Charlie Allebach, Jr.'s career as the mayor of Souderton, Pennsylvania, can be memorialized within the annals of Congress for all time.

Thank you, Charlie, for a job well done.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord our God, ever-faithful throughout the ages and seasons of life, the cold winds of January rob the memory of Washington's heat and stretch our longing for another spring.

And January 30 recalls for us, Lord, another distant memory. On this day in 1948, Mahatma Gandhi was killed by a young religious zealot. The personification of nonviolence was overcome by violence.

Lord, the voice of this "great soul," who spoke out in the midst of politics to end oppression and seek independence seems forgotten by us now, caught up in the war on terrorism.

In this mad spin around the sun, Lord, we cannot help but question whether we are an evolving world about to break upon the brightness of a new day or dissolving into the cold of Dante's darkness.

Raise up, O Lord, a prophetic light and lead us, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KAGEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to plead for health care reform. In recent weeks, I have received more than 150 letters from my constituents asking for health care reform. No one has written expressing satisfaction over the current health care system. Most seniors feel that their medicine coverage is still costing too much. Others cite fear and losing access to choice of health insurance plans or medicines.

I am in favor of sweeping reforms to the system rather than the piecemeal and "quick-fix" methods of the past.

In Dallas, the poor, elderly and disabled are hurting the most when it comes to health care. Texas has the largest number of uninsured in the Nation, and our emergency rooms are bursting.

Madam Speaker, it is time for a new strategy. Let's consider comprehensive health care reform that will improve our health care system and make a real difference for Dallas and for America's citizens.

FEDERAL TIMBER POLICY SHATTERED HARNEY COUNTY'S ECONOMY

(Mr. WALDEN of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, the failure of Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act is another day with another broken promise.

When the Federal Government abruptly slashed timber harvest, the economy in Harney County, Oregon, population about 7,000, nearly collapsed. Hundreds of family-wage jobs were lost; 78 percent of the land mass in Harney County is controlled by the Federal Government so the govern-

ment's decision had a dramatic effect on the people who live there.

In 2000, Congress did the right thing by approving the county payments program which in Harney County supports roads, community services, and Burns High School where 60 percent of the student body takes vocational classes.

Take Jim Gibbon, a Burns High graduate and 4-year vocational classes participant. Through that learning, he is now co-owner of Burns Ford and they employ 20 people.

County Judge Steve Grasty says, "Loss of this program means losing future opportunities for young people here and in rural counties across America."

This Congress must keep the Federal Government's word to timber communities and pass H.R. 17. Time is running out.

RESTORING FISCAL SANITY

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, it is time we restore fiscal sanity to Washington. In 6 short years, Republican policies turned a \$5.6 trillion surplus into a \$3 trillion deficit. That is an \$8 trillion reversal of fortune.

And last year, congressional Republicans never came to an agreement on the budget and refused to pass nine of the 11 must-pass appropriations bills before adjourning in December. This isn't how the appropriations process is supposed to work, and the American people know it.

Democrats vow we are going to get things done and done on time. This year, Democrats brought much-needed reform to Congress by passing a rules package that require Democrats to pay-as-we-go. This isn't a new idea. From 1990 to 2002, Congresses and administrations of both parties abided by commonsense rules that stated you couldn't cut taxes and increase spending unless you paid for it. Pay-as-you-go was one of the main reasons Washington balanced the books in the 1990s.

This week, since Republicans were unable to do their job last year, Democrats will bring a final bill to the floor that will fund key priorities. This bill will allow us to move forward with fiscal sanity.

OPPOSE CONTINUING RESOLUTION

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today in objection to the so-called continuing resolution the Democrat leadership is going to bring up tomorrow. This is by no means a typical continuing resolution. A continuing resolution basically requires only a couple of lines saying that the current appropriations are continuing for a set period of time.